

Claims

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A method of receiving an item in an online environment from an online item provider without disclosing the real name and real address of the user to said online item provider, comprising:

connecting a computer to an Internet service provider,
running a browser on said computer,
accessing a first Web site using said browser,
storing the user's real name and real address on said Web site,
storing a virtual name and virtual address on said Web site linked to said real name and real address,
accessing a second Web site of said online item provider
presenting said item to said user,
selecting said item to be received by said user from said online item provider, and
utilizing said virtual name and virtual address on said second Web site for shipping information by said online item provider.

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2. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

shipping said item to said virtual name at said virtual address,

receiving said item at a location corresponding to said virtual address,

relabeling said item with said user's real name and real address by accessing said stored information on said first Web site, and

shipping said item to said real name at said real address.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

providing said item to a shipper having access to a third Web site associated with said first web site,

connecting to said third Web site and associating said virtual address with said real address, and

delivering said item to said real address.

4. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

selecting and storing an optional payment method presented by said first Web site, and

linking said virtual name and said virtual address to said payment method.

5. The method as claimed in claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

providing said payment method to said online item provider, and
utilizing said payment method to receive a payment for said item selected.

6. The method as claimed in claim 5 further comprising the steps of:

shipping said item to said virtual name at said virtual address,
receiving said item at a secure location corresponding to said virtual address,
relabeling said item with said user's real name and real address by accessing said stored information on said first Web site,
utilizing said payment method linked to said virtual name and virtual address to receive a shipping and handling payment, and
shipping said item to said real name at said real address.

7. The method as claimed in claim 5 further comprising the steps of:

providing said item to a shipper having access to a third Web site associated with said first Web site,

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connecting to said third Web site and associating said virtual address with said real address, utilizing said payment method linked to said virtual name and virtual address to receive a shipping and handling payment, and delivering said item to said real address.

8. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

entering and storing a real credit card number associated with said real name and real address on said Web site, and providing said user with a virtual credit card number associated with said virtual name and virtual address.

9. The method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

providing said virtual credit card number to said online item provider, and utilizing said virtual credit card number to receive a payment for said item selected.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9 further comprising the steps of:

shipping said item to said virtual name at said virtual address,

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11. The method as claimed in claim 9 further comprising the steps of:

providing said item to a shipper having access to a third Web site associated with said first web site, connecting to said third Web site and associating said virtual address with said real address, utilizing said virtual credit card associated with said virtual name and virtual address to receive a shipping and handling payment, and delivering said item to said real address.

Sub a1 12. A method of providing, receiving and using prepaid mailing labels in an online environment utilizing a virtual name and virtual address for providing payment, comprising:

displaying a web page on a user computer connected to an internet service provider and running a browser, said web page from a server hosting a first web page for establishing a virtual name and virtual address and providing payment information;

entering and storing a real name, a real address and payment information on said Web site for said user;

entering and storing a virtual name and virtual address on said Web site linked to said payment information, and providing prepaid shipping labels to said user preprinted with said virtual name, virtual address, and an indicia encoding said virtual name, said virtual address, and a payment web site address having a link to said first web site for accessing said payment information.

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applying said shipping labels to a package having a
mailing address and mailing said package,
scanning said barcode,

linking to said payment web site and posting a charge based on said payment information associated with said virtual name and virtual address, and shipping said package to address on said package.

14. A method of receiving goods in an online environment utilizing a virtual name and address, comprising:

- connecting a computer to an Internet service provider,
- running a browser on said computer,
- accessing a first Web site for establishing a virtual name and virtual address using said browser,
- storing the user's real name and real address on said Web site,
- storing a virtual name and virtual address on said Web site linked to said real name and real address,
- accessing a second Web site presenting goods of interest to said user,
- selecting at least one of said goods to be received by said user,
- providing said virtual name and virtual address to said second Web site for shipping information,
- labeling said goods with said virtual name and said virtual address,
- providing said goods to a shipper having access to a third Web site associated with said first Web site,
- connecting to said third Web site and associating said virtual address with said real address, and
- delivering said goods to said real address.

15. The method as claimed in claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

providing prepaid shipping labels to said user preprinted with said virtual name, virtual address, and an indicia encoding said virtual name, said virtual address, and a payment Web site address having a link to said first Web site for accessing said payment information.

16. The method as claimed in claim 15 further comprising the steps of:

applying said shipping labels to a package having a mailing address and mailing said package, scanning said indicia, linking to said payment Web site and posting a charge based on said payment information associated with said virtual name and virtual address, and shipping said package to address on said package.

17. The method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said indicia is a barcode.

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